

# Ding

Department of Philosophy  
University of Arizona  
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**SPECIALIZATIONS** Feminist & Trans Philosophy; Political & Legal Philosophy; Social Metaphysics

**COMPETENCIES** Ethics; Logic; Analytic Metaphysics

**EDUCATION** Ph.D. in Philosophy, University of Arizona, May 2025 (expected)

Dissertation: *On Our Own Terms: Equality and the Social Meaning of Bodies*

Advisors: Thomas Christiano and Jason Turner (co-chairs), Suzanne Dovi (political theory), and Sara Bernstein (external)

B.A. in Philosophy, *summa cum laude*, The Ohio State University, 2019

**PUBLICATIONS** “Pregnant Persons as a Gender Category: A Trans Feminist Analysis of Pregnancy Discrimination,” *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, forthcoming

**PUBLIC WRITING** “**Gender, Equality, and Feminism through a Philosopher’s Lens**,” Pride Month interview for the UA College of Social & Behavioral Sciences, June 20, 2024 (invited)

“**Putting Gender Back into Transgender Equality: On Iglesias v. Federal Bureau of Prisons**,” *Blog of the American Philosophical Association*, September 21, 2023 (solicited for the Law and Philosophy Series)

**TALKS** “Is Euthyphro a Man Because He Identifies as a Man?”

(refereed unless otherwise noted) American Philosophical Association, Central Division, February 2025 (virtual)

“Gender from the Ground Up: Equality and the Metasemantics of ‘Woman’”

Canadian Society for Trans Philosophy Founding Conference, August 2024

“‘Medical Diagnosis, Not Sex or Gender Identity’: Transgender Equality and the Neutral Application Problem”

Association for Political Theory, November 2024

American Philosophical Association, Pacific Division, March 2024

Workshop on Law, Ethics, and Political Theory, UCLA School of Law, November 2023 – *prize for the best graduate/JD student submission*

“Taking Gender Seriously: Transgender Equality as Gender Equality”

American Philosophical Association, Central Division, February 2024

“On Our Own Terms: Trans Women Crafting the Meaning of ‘Woman’”

Seminar on Current Debates in Feminist Philosophy, University of Guelph, Canada, February 2024 (virtual pre-read class visit; invited)

USC-UCLA Graduate Conference in Philosophy, April 2023

“Pregnant Persons as a Gender Category: A Trans Feminist Analysis of Pregnancy Discrimination”

Harvard-MIT Graduate Conference in Philosophy, April 2023

American Philosophical Association, Central Division, February 2023

“Two Senses in Which Freedom Might (Not) Require Alternative Possibilities”

Workshop on Free Will and Agency, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, May 2020 (canceled due to COVID-19)

#### INVITED COMMENTS

April Chan’s “Love for the Unborn,” 5th Arizona Feminist Philosophy Graduate Conference, April 2024

Lauren Perry’s “A Victim by Any Other Name? A Speech Act Analysis of Victim-Blaming,” 4th Arizona Feminist Philosophy Graduate Conference, April 2023

Joan O’Bryan’s “Uncovering an Idealist Ontology of Patriarchy: Patriarchy as a System of Meaning in Beauvoir, Butler, and MacKinnon,” 3rd Arizona Feminist Philosophy Graduate Conference, March 2022

Anastasiia Grigoreva’s “Nonbinary Russians: The Excluded by Robin Dembroff’s Account of Genderqueer,” 2nd Arizona Feminist Philosophy Graduate Conference, May 2021 (virtual)

Dee Payton’s “Ameliorative Projects in the Philosophy of Gender,” 1st Arizona Feminist Philosophy Graduate Conference, February 2020

#### TEACHING

##### *Instructor of Record*

Sex, Gender, and Love (Fall 2024, 72 students, with a grader)

New introductory course developed for the university’s refreshed General Education curriculum (approved in January 2024)

Feminist Philosophy (Spring 2024, 18 students; Spring 2023, 36 students)

Law and Morality (Winter 2023, 41 students; Summer 2023, 23 students; Summer 2021 Sess. II, 14 students; Summer 2021 Sess. I, 38 students; Summer 2020, 13 students; all asynchronous online)

Logic in Law (Fall 2022, 14 students; Spring 2022, 10 students)

Medical Ethics (Fall 2021, 54 students)

##### *Teaching Assistant*

Contemporary Moral Problems (Michael McKenna, Fall 2023, 94 students, full teaching responsibility for guest module on the ethics and metaphysics of sexism)

Personal Morality (Carolina Sartorio, Spring 2021, 81 students)

Freedom, Equality, and Authority (Tom Christiano, Fall 2020, 71 students)

Mind, Matter, and God (Chris Maloney, Fall 2019, 153 students, 2 GTAs)

##### *Undergraduate Honors Papers Advised*

Morrigan Malloy (Feminist Philosophy, Spring 2023, the ethics of abortion)

Catie Holt (Medical Ethics, Fall 2021, patient autonomy)

Lauren Skyler (Medical Ethics, Fall 2021, the ethics of organ cloning)

**SERVICE***Departmental*

University of Arizona Ethics Bowl Team, Co-Coach, Fall 2019–Fall 2021; Coach, Fall 2022–

Ranked top three for the Spirit of Ethics Bowl Award, Rocky Mountain Regional Ethics Bowl, November 2023

Volunteer, Ask-a-Philosopher booth at the Tucson Festival of Books, March 2024

Panelist for session on teaching, Graduate Student Orientation, August 2023

General Education Refresh Committee, Fall 2022–Spring 2023

Organizer, Trans Feminism Reading Group, Summer 2022–Fall 2022

Guest Speaker, Undergraduate Philosophy Club, March 2022

Organizer, Feminist Philosophy Reading Group, Spring 2020–Summer 2021

*Professional*

Co-Organizer, Arizona Feminist Philosophy Graduate Conference, Fall 2019–

Session Chair for Gus Turyn’s “Hurt Feelings and Excuses,” American Philosophical Association, Central Division, February 2024

*Referee*

*Journal of Applied Philosophy; Politics, Philosophy & Economics*; Arizona Feminist Philosophy Graduate Conference (23 papers); UA Graduate & Professional Student Council (20 grants)

**SELECTED AWARDS**

Julia Annas Graduate Teaching Award, Department of Philosophy, University of Arizona, May 2024 (awarded to two graduate students for outstanding teaching)

William H. Fink Prize, Department of Philosophy, University of Arizona, May 2024 (awarded to two graduate students for overall outstanding academic accomplishments)

Prize for the best graduate/JD student submission to the Workshop on Law, Ethics, and Political Theory, UCLA Law & Philosophy Program, November 2023 (only student paper selected for presentation from nearly 100 submissions from scholars of all career stages)

*Ad Hoc* Service Award, Department of Philosophy, University of Arizona, May 2023 (one-time award of \$2,500 in recognition of mentorship of the UA ethics bowl team)

Co-Recipient, Emil R. Riesen and Austin H. Riesen Prize for the best essay by a graduate student, Department of Philosophy, University of Arizona, May 2020

William E. Bingham Award for the best undergraduate paper in philosophy, Department of Philosophy, The Ohio State University, April 2017

**GRANTS**

Travel Grant, Graduate & Professional Student Council, University of Arizona, February 2024 & February 2023 (two selective grants of \$1,000 each for conference travel)

Travel Support Fund, College of Social & Behavioral Sciences, University of Arizona, October 2023 (selective grant of \$500 for the UA ethics bowl team’s travel expenses)

**GRADUATE  
COURSEWORK**

*Value Theory*

- The Rationality and Morality of Political Participation (Tom Christiano; audited)
- Iris Marion Young's *Justice and the Politics of Difference* (Tom Christiano; directed reading/independent study)
- The Law and Philosophy of Contracts (Tom Christiano and Simone Sepe)
- Philosophical Foundations of Private Law (Tom Christiano and Simone Sepe)
- Moral Phenomenology (Mark Timmons & Terry Horgan)
- Modeling Political Philosophy (Jerry Gaus)
- Sentimentalism in Ethics (Justin D'Arms, Ohio State)

*Metaphysics, Epistemology, and Semantics*

- Topics in Metaphysics: Ontology, Time, and Modality (Jason Turner; audited)
- Metasemantics (Jason Turner)
- Grounding Agency and Responsibility (Carolina Sartorio and Michael McKenna)
- Recent Topics in Philosophical Methodology: Experimental Philosophy, Epistemic Diversity, and Conceptual Engineering (Jonathan Weinberg)
- Knowledge and Skepticism (Juan Comesaña)
- Defeaters in Epistemology (Juan Comesaña)
- Theories of Action and Free Will (Carolina Sartorio and Michael McKenna)

*History*

- Kant's Conception of Transcendental Critique (Houston Smit)
- Descartes and Leibniz (Houston Smit)
- Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* (Lisa Shabel, Ohio State)

*Logic*

- Logical Consequence (Jason Turner)
- Metatheory of Classical and Non-Classical First-Order Logics (Neil Tennant, Ohio State)

**READING  
GROUPS**

*Faculty-Directed*

- Seana Shiffrin's *Democratic Law* (Tom Christiano, Stefan Sciaraffa, and Steve Wall)
- Niko Kolodny's *The Pecking Order: Social Hierarchy as a Philosophical Problem* (Tom Christiano, Stefan Sciaraffa, and Steve Wall)
- Colin Bird's *Human Dignity and Political Criticism* (Julia Annas, Tom Christiano, and Stefan Sciaraffa)
- Margaret Gilbert's *Rights and Demands: A Foundational Inquiry* (Julia Annas, Tom Christiano, and Stefan Sciaraffa)
- Sophia Moreau's *Faces of Inequality: A Theory of Wrongful Discrimination* (Tom Christiano and Stefan Sciaraffa)
- Kristi Olson's *The Solidarity Solution: Principles for a Fair Income Distribution* (Tom Christiano)

Martha Nussbaum's *Women and Human Development: The Capabilities Approach* (Tom Christiano)

Amartya Sen's *Inequality Reexamined* (Tom Christiano)

Carolina Sartorio's *Causation and Free Will* (Carolina Sartorio)

Relational Egalitarianism (Tom Christiano)

*Students-Led*

Julia Serano's *Sexed Up: How Society Sexualizes Us, and How We Can Fight Back*

Talia Mae Bettcher

Relational Autonomy

Miranda Fricker's *Epistemic Injustice: Power and the Ethics of Knowing*

Race and Racial Identity

Eva Feder Kittay's *Learning from My Daughter: The Value and Care of Disabled Minds*

Elizabeth Barnes's *The Minority Body: A Theory of Disability*

REFERENCES

Nora Berenstain

Professor of Philosophy

Chair, Women, Gender, and Sexuality Interdisciplinary Program

University of Tennessee, Knoxville

*External Reference*

Sara Bernstein

R.L. Canala College Professor of Philosophy

University of Notre Dame

*External Committee Member*

Thomas Christiano

Professor & Head of Philosophy

University of Arizona

*Committee Co-Chair*

Suzanne Dovi

Professor of Government & Public Policy

University of Arizona

*Committee Member*

Michael McKenna

Professor of Philosophy

University of Arizona

*Teaching Reference*

Jason Turner

Professor of Philosophy

University of Arizona

*Committee Co-Chair*

DISSERTATION  
ABSTRACT

My dissertation presents an account of transgender equality as an element, requirement, and condition of gender equality, which I defend on the grounds that it resolves difficult conceptual challenges that continue to frustrate current feminist theory and

politics. I argue that an empirically and explanatorily adequate treatment of transgender equality in particular and gender equality more broadly needs to take seriously both the gender (the social metaphysics) and the equality (the political philosophy) of gender equality, not just one or the other. The upshot is that transgender equality not only poses pressing difficulties for, but more constructively sheds refreshing light on, our understanding of the meaning and requirements of gender equality.

Taking emerging doctrinal issues in U.S. constitutional law as my point of departure, the three papers in Part I draw on the metaphysics of gender to work out an analysis of gender equality that for the first time makes sense of both pregnancy and transgender discrimination as issues of gender without diminishing trans people's lived genders. At the heart of this analysis is an account of gender discrimination in terms of substantive disadvantages enabled by the unequal social meaning of bodies being interpreted as sexed one way or another, which I in turn theorize by way of nonbinary gender categories such as *pregnant persons* and *persons diagnosed with gender dysphoria*. The four papers that make up Part II then bring the analysis of transgender equality as gender equality fleshed out in Part I back to bear on the metaphysics of gender. Rejecting the prevailing understanding that the concept of gender identity is key to explaining trans people's genders, I offer an account of gender as a constructive process of social interpretation on the model of inference to the best explanation—quite literally, I argue, like building with Legos.

*Last updated: August 20, 2024*